



KENTUCKY BOARD OF NURSING

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Clinical Internship: What New Graduates Need to Know

What is the Clinical Internship? The statute defines clinical internship as: "A supervised nursing practice experience, which involves any component of *direct patient care*." (KRS314.011 (20)) "The Clinical Internship shall last a minimum of 120 hours and shall be completed within six (6) months of the issuance of the provisional license". (KRS314.041 (4); 314.051 (5)) The key elements include: direct patient care, supervised by a licensed nurse, 120 hours, and 6 month time frame.

What does the Board consider to be "direct patient care"? "Direct patient care" can be defined by the obvious components of "hands on" care but would include other activities related to patient care such as obtaining or giving report, charting, communicating with physicians, etc.

How does the Board define "supervised nursing practice"? To qualify as "direct supervision", the nurse responsible for the applicant shall at all times be physically present in the facility and immediately available to the applicant while the applicant is engaged in the clinical internship. The nurse responsible for the applicant shall be currently licensed to practice as a nurse in Kentucky. (201 KAR 20:070, section 4 (a) & (10))

When is the effective date for the Clinical Internship Requirement? Any person applying for licensure by examination in Kentucky on or after January 1, 2006 will be required to show successful completion of the clinical internship prior to being made eligible to take NCLEX.

When should I apply for my Kentucky Nursing License? New Graduates should make application to Kentucky when they feel confident that they will be able to complete the internship within the next six (6) months. Once the program of nursing sends validation to the Board that you have completed your program + your application is complete, a provisional license will be issued. Once this provisional license is issued, you have six months to complete the internship and successfully complete NCLEX in order to continue practicing as a nurse.

What if something should happen and the applicant is not able to complete the internship within the six-month period of time? The only way that a second provisional license can be issued is if an applicant should experience a temporary physical or mental inability to complete the clinical internship. The applicant, prior to the expiration of the provisional license, must contact the Board and submit a petition to "Hold Provisional License in Abeyance". In order for the Board to rule on this, the applicant is required to submit evidence from a licensed health care practitioner that documents a diagnosis of a temporary physical or mental inability that prevents the applicant from completing the internship within the original six (6) months. Until the time that a second provisional license is issued, the person may not engage in nursing practice; this includes any time devoted to orientation.

Can an applicant request a second provisional license for a reason other than for physical or mental inability to complete the internship? No. It is critical that a nurse applicant not submit his/her application for licensure in Kentucky until they believe that they will be able to complete the internship and take the NCLEX examination within the six-month period of time that the provisional license is active.

Are there any restrictions where the Clinical Internship can be completed? Does it have to occur in the intended practice area? The internship can be completed in any clinical setting where direct patient care is provided and there is a licensed nurse available to provide direct supervision. Though not mandated, it stands to reason that the preferred setting for the internship would be the clinical area where the new nurse will work once full licensure is granted. Since the purpose of the internship is to allow the new graduate an opportunity to work with a licensed nurse, it is desirable, but not required, that it be within the clinical area where they will continue to practice.

Do I have to be employed by the site where the internship is conducted? Employment is not a requirement for the completion of the internship. The only stipulation is that the 120 hours is completed post graduation and following receipt of the provisional license. More than likely internships will be completed at the new graduate's place of employment.

STARTING THE INTERNSHIP

When can I start the internship? An applicant can begin the internship as soon as it is verified that they have an active provisional license. Applicants will receive the provisional license via US Mail. Verification can also be accomplished via the KBN website: www.kbn.ky.gov. Beginning the internship before a provisional license is issued is considered to be practicing without a nursing license thus making the applicant subject to disciplinary action.

When can I expect to receive my provisional license? Once your application is complete and the Board has received verification from your program of nursing that you have graduated, a provisional license will be processed and mailed within seven to fourteen business days.

How do I sign my name in charting during the internship/provisional license period? A new applicant should sign his/her name with the initials of RNA (Registered Nurse Applicant) or LPNA (Licensed Practical Nurse Applicant).

COMPLETING THE INTERNSHIP

The 120 hours is complete- how do I communicate this to the Board? A form is available for use by the applicant for submitting the information but use of the form is not MANDATORY. As long as the required information is submitted, it will be accepted in any format. If the KBN form is not used, documentation must be submitted on agency letterhead.

Documentation of completion of the clinical internship must include the following information: Name, address, telephone number, social security number and date of birth of the applicant; Provisional license number; Name, address and telephone number of the facility where the clinical internship was completed; and Name of the supervising nurse.

If sent by mail: Kentucky Board of Nursing
Attn: Credentials Branch - EX
312 Whittington Parkway, Suite 300
Louisville, KY 40222

If sent by fax: 502-429-3311

Who should send in the verification of internship completion? Since the license belongs to the nurse applicant, it is the applicant's ultimate responsibility to send in or make certain that the documentation has been sent to the Board indicating that the internship has been completed.

If I have more than one nurse as a supervising nurse during the internship, whom do I identify as the supervising nurse? The supervising nurse should be the nurse who has spent the most time with you during this 120-hour period. If you do not have a primary nurse, talk with the nurse manager or staff development to seek guidance on whom to name.

How does my practice change once the internship is completed? There is no change from the practice that the applicant engaged in during the internship. As long as the applicant is an RNA or LPNA, by law they shall only work

under direct supervision and shall not engage in independent nursing practice. (KRS314.041 (5) and KRS314.051 (6))

I have completed the internship, when can I take NCLEX? First, you will need to have registered for the examination. Once the completion of the internship is validated at the Board office, we will notify NCLEX that you are eligible to take the examination. You will then receive your ATT or Authorization to Test from the testing center (Pearson-Vue). Once the ATT is received, you have 90 days to schedule and take the exam. To avoid any interruption in your practice, watch the calendar to be sure that you will have time to obtain your NCLEX results (about 2 weeks following the test) before your provisional license expires.

What happens if I am unsuccessful on NCLEX ? If the applicant should be unsuccessful on NCLEX, the provisional license is voided and shall be immediately returned to the Board. Since the person no longer holds a provisional license, they can no longer work in the capacity of a nurse applicant. The applicant would have to re-apply to the Board for a license and follow the re-testing process. Persons are eligible to re-test no sooner than 45 days.

Will I be required to repeat the internship at any point? Once the internship has been completed and verified, the applicant will not be required to repeat this process for licensure purposes. The only time that another internship will be required is if the nurse moves to a different level of licensure, i.e. an LPN who returns to school to become an RN or an RN graduate that seeks licensure as an LPN. In both incidences, the nurse would be required to complete an internship for the new corresponding level of practice.

References: KRS 314.011; 051; 041; 201 KAR 20:070.
Licensure by examination. August 4, 2005